

Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government

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“Without Freedom of Thought, there can be no such thing as Wisdom; and no such thing as public liberty, without Freedom of Speech.” - Benjamin Franklin

I love our country. I cherish our God-given freedoms enshrined in the Constitution. Like you, I swore an oath, both as a soldier and as a Member of Congress, to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, against all enemies foreign and domestic.

I had the privilege of serving alongside many of you in Congress for eight years representing the people of Hawaii’s 2nd District on the Armed Services and Foreign Affairs committees. I’m honored to continue to serve as a Lieutenant Colonel in the US Army Reserves for almost 20 years. Through that time, I’ve deployed to three warzones and participated in multiple overseas training exercises where I’ve seen firsthand what life is like in countries where there is no First Amendment, no free press; where government deems itself to be the moral arbiter, dictating to the people what is right and wrong, what can and cannot be said, who can speak, who cannot, who is free to worship and who is not.

Our founders understood the importance of enshrining our God-given freedoms in the Constitution and Bill of Rights, so that no matter which party or person happens to be in power at any given time, our founding documents serve as a reminder of the freedoms guaranteed to every American.

Thomas Paine, said: “He that would make his own liberty secure must guard even his enemy from opposition; for if he violates this duty, he establishes a precedent that will reach to himself.”—

Dissertations on First Principles of Government, Thomas Paine

We cannot be so short-sighted as to think silencing speech we don't like today, will not result in our own voices being silenced tomorrow.

The work that you have been charged with in this committee affects all Americans and is too important to fall victim to partisan politics. No matter how deep your differences, we must all stand on the side of liberty.

Unfortunately, we live in a culture of fear where many Americans are afraid to speak freely, express themselves, have open dialogue and debate. Afraid of losing their job, being canceled, or accused of a crime – which could happen if recently introduced legislation criminalizing so-called hate speech is passed into law.

This fear is not unfounded. We have individuals in our government, often working through their arms in the mainstream media and big tech, doing exactly what our Founders rejected – trying to control what we are allowed to see and say under the guise of protecting us from so-called “misinformation” or “disinformation.” Of course, they appoint themselves as the sole authority and voice of truth – of information – backed by the most lethal force on earth with the power to target anyone they deem a threat. They alone get to decide what is true and what is false, what is information and what is mis/disinformation. They say they're doing this for us, for our own good, but really, they think we are too stupid to think for ourselves, to discern and draw our own conclusions.

The idea that we must blindly accept whatever the government or those in power tell us as true, goes against the very essence of our Constitution and Bill of Rights, which were created as a resounding rejection of the reign of kings, churches, and authorities.

They want us to blindly trust them or face the consequences, even though our government has a long history of lying to the American people – about WMDs in Iraq, about how we failed in Afghanistan for nearly 2 decades, lies about Vietnam revealed in the Pentagon Papers, lies about our own government illegally surveilling Americans ... just to name a few.

If we choose not to accept whatever those in power declare is the so-called truth, we are accused of being anti-authority, seen as a danger to society, accused of spreading misinformation and are targeted, smeared, called “Russian asset, white supremacist, bigot, racist, sexist, extremist, traitor ...” canceled, silenced.

More dangerous than any baseless smear, our own government institutions, which exist to serve the people, are being weaponized against us.

The Department of Homeland Security declared a heightened domestic terrorism threat due to three factors, the FIRST of which is “the proliferation of false or misleading narratives, which sow discord or undermine public trust in US government institutions.” And they are the ones who decide what are ‘false or misleading narratives.’

Former CIA Director John Brennan said in 2021 that “[M]embers of the Biden team ... are now moving in laser-like fashion to try to uncover as much as they can about what looks very similar to insurgency movements that we've seen overseas ... an unholy alliance frequently of religious extremists, authoritarians, fascists, bigots, racists, Nativists, even libertarians.”

Attorney General Garland charged his newly created Domestic Terrorism Unit with targeting those who hold ‘anti-authority’ views ... including parents who dare to stand up for their right to have a say in their child’s education.

A draft copy of the DHS Quadrennial Homeland Security Review outlined their intent to target ‘inaccurate information’ on a whole host of topics that include COVID origins, vaccines, US withdrawal from Afghanistan and US support to Ukraine. Their “Misinformation, Disinformation and Malinformation” team exists to “counter all types of disinformation.”

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg revealed on the Joe Rogan Experience podcast that Facebook limited the exposure of the New York Post’s Hunter Biden laptop story only after talking with the FBI. Twitter did the same, and recently apologized for doing so, recognizing it was wrong.

The cozy relationship between White House officials, the FBI, and big tech is well documented and results in private companies not restricted by the First Amendment, doing the dirty censorship work that those in government are not legally allowed to do themselves.

The threat big tech monopolies pose to our democracy is real and serious. After the first Democratic Primary presidential debate, I was the most searched candidate online. Unfortunately and suddenly, my Google ads account was mysteriously suspended without any notice or explanation. There were no responses to our multiple attempts to resolve whatever the problem could have been. Some time passed, and magically my account was reinstated, with no explanation or apology. They limited my ability to connect with voters who were actively seeking more information about my campaign. This happens all the time - they interfere in our democracy by manipulating search results based on what they want voters to know about a particular candidate or issue.

Through the release of the Twitter files detailed by Matt Taibbi, high level former FBI and CIA officials were behind Hamilton 68 and their list of 644 social media accounts supposedly linked to ‘Russian influence activities online.’ Hamilton 68’s work was widely cited as FACT by Harvard and Stanford, mainstream news organizations, Members of the House and Senate from both parties, including the head

of the intelligence committee. The problem is it was false. Twitter determined the vast majority of accounts Hamilton 68 targeted were ‘neither strongly Russian, nor strongly bots’ – most were anti-establishment American voices from across the political spectrum. I was one of them.

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton accused me -- a sitting Member of Congress, a soldier, and a candidate running for President -- of being ‘groomed by the Russians.’ Her baseless smear was very harmful to my campaign for the presidency. One day, I was in South Carolina at a campaign event and was approached by an elderly woman who put her hands on my shoulders and looked at me, shaking as she said, “Look me in the eyes and tell me if you are working for Putin.” I held her as I looked right back and told her how much I love this country, and that I am willing to give my own life to defend her.

US Senator Mitt Romney recently accused me of treason – a crime punishable by death. No evidence. No basis. No explanation.

These accusations may be just words to you that are easily shrugged off, but as a soldier, they are serious - not only to me, but to my fellow servicemembers, each of us voluntarily putting our life on the line in service to this country we love. What does that mean? Before every deployment, finding peace in our heart knowing this trip could be our last. Writing letters to our loved ones, trying to find the words to express my love and gratitude, knowing this could be my final goodbye.

This is much bigger than me or any one individual. When those who dare to challenge the establishment are targeted by this powerful conglomerate of government, corporate media and big tech, weaponizing our government against the people for their own selfish gain, it has a chilling effect on free speech and sends a powerful message: if you dare to challenge the power elite, they will come after you. The more this happens, we start looking less and less like a democratic republic and more like a banana republic.

Instead of a government ordained “to secure these rights,” we face a government increasingly determined to take them away.

George Washington warned:

“For if Men are to be precluded from offering their Sentiments on a matter, which may involve the most serious and alarming consequences, that can invite the consideration of Mankind, reason is of no use to us; the freedom of Speech may be taken away, and, dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep, to the Slaughter.”

George Washington, Address to the officers of the army, March 15, 1783

We must stop this insanity and protect these sacred freedoms. Vanquish the fear and self-censorship. Revive the open marketplace of ideas that is at the heart of a thriving democracy with vigorous debate, think for ourselves, draw our own conclusions, disagree without devolving to hate, respect each other as fellow Americans and treat each other with aloha.

For the sake of the American people, our freedom, and the future of this country we love – I pray we can set aside partisan differences and commit to standing together to defend the Constitutional right of every American to live free.

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